

"TO SUPPORT AND DEFEND"

Selected Quotes

I have an intense attachment to that wall in Washington, D.C. Now, who's going to start chiseling off ten percent of those names? Five-thousand eight-hundred of them would have to come off if we assume, if we know, that ten percent of those people that were sent to Vietnam, and that died, were gay. I wanna know who's going to start chiseling names off. --Sgt. Bruce Graner - *United States National Guard*

RECRUITMENT & RE-ENLISTMENT

Considering that these people have signed up to basically put their bodies in front of bullets, if they're not afraid of bullets then why should they be afraid of serving alongside a gay soldier? --Lt. Maria Zoe Dunning - *United States Navy*

TRUST & CONFIDENCE

When you're open with your fellow co-workers and you un-burden yourself basically by saying, "yes, I am gay," you would be amazed how much trust that develops between you and that co-worker, and there's bonding. And then you can go on and leave your sexual orientation as just a small part of your life and get on with the things that are very important; like your career, like your friendships, like your recreation. --Lt. David Zeni - *United States Navy*

PUBLIC ACCEPTABILITY

I've had an outpouring of support from the American public. I've been very happy because that's the energy that keeps me going. People walk up to me in the street and it could be a mother with her children, or an old man and an old woman, and they say, "Son we think you're doing the right thing," and they pat me on the back and tell me to keep going. --Petty Officer 1st Class V. Keith Meinhold - *United States Navy*

COMBAT

Well, you see a lot of blood and guts. The same blood and guts whether they be straight or gay...you see them as another human being, as a buddy of yours. And you don't see them as a straight person or a gay person or a married person or a single person or a black person or a white person. You're all in this together, and if they were less fortunate than you were, and you can help them out, you do it. --Sgt. Major Richard Buchanan - *United States Army*

PRIVACY & CONDUCT

The whole military issue is the fact that a straight person won't want to shower with me, a straight person won't want to live in close quarters with me if we're out in the field or in combat or...you know, share a room with me, or change in front of me, and all those kinds of things. But, the people in my unit, when they testified at my hearing, all came out and said, "we have no problem showering with him, we have no problem changing in front of him," that they knew me, they knew what kind of soldier I am, and basically that nothing would change. --Specialist E4 Jason Skerik - *United States Army*

CIVIL RIGHTS

And even if it were a choice (to be gay or lesbian), the constitution protects my choices, say, in religion, and so there are choices that are protected by the constitution. So, even if it could be proved that it was a choice, which I don't think it is, I still think our status as gay men and lesbians needs to be protected.

--Rev. Dr. Dusty Pruitt - Capt., United States Army Reserves

LESBIANS IN THE MILITARY

If they really took into account the lesbians who are in the service right now, how successful they are, I think that a lot of the arguments would just fall apart. I know personally for my ship, of the lesbians I knew on board, if you took all of us off, that ship would not have been able to get underway. --Lt. Maria Zoe Dunning, United States Navy

MORALE & DISCIPLINE/UNIT COHESION

Unit cohesion is not a problem unless those in the top echelon tell those who are lower down that it's okay to be prejudiced, it's okay to be bigoted. But if the word comes down that bigotry is not allowed in any way, shape, or form, unit cohesion will be maintained. --Capt. Robert Michael Rankin, M.D. - United States Navy

I don't expect everybody in the military to be my friend. I don't expect everybody in the military to accept my sexual orientation. God knows, it took me 27 years to come to terms with my sexual orientation. But what I do expect them to do is do their job as professionally as possible and that's all we ask anybody in the military, is to do their job. --Petty Officer V. Keith Mienhold - United States Navy

ENDING CAREERS

I just said "I'm gay"...boom. I went from an A+ one day to an F- type of Marine the next day, you know, and it kinda makes you wonder how you can do that in one full swoop, with one word coming out of your mouth. --Sgt. Justin Elzie - United States Marine Corp.

COMING OUT VS. THE CLOSET: TAKING A STAND

We've got to tell people that, "We're still here. We're still serving our country proudly. Don't let us down. Don't discriminate." And so, as far as I'm concerned, my ten years is there as a record, it's an example, but I've got to put that behind me now. This is my duty now to show that I'm a loyal Marine, and that I'm trying to educate people. This is the way it really is. This is the truth. --Sgt. Justin Elzie - United States Marine Corp.

Interviews

SERGEANT WALT BENDICK - UNITED STATES ARMY

Born in Ohio, Sgt. Bendick served as a Medic in Vietnam for one year and carried out his duties under fire. He received the Army Commendation Medal, the Good Conduct Medal and two Service Ribbons. In Vietnam, Bendick progressed five ranks, was honored as Soldier of the Month and his unit received Citations for Meritorious Service.

SERGEANT TONY BENFIELD - UNITED STATES MARINE CORP.

Sgt. Benfield was born in the Canal Zone, Panama. During his nine years in the Marine Corp. as an Infantry Motor Man, Recon Scuba Diver, Sgt. Benfield received two Good Conduct Medals and a C-Service Deployment Ribbon with 1 Star. He was a marksmanship instructor and is a current member of the NRA.

SERGEANT MAJOR RICK BUCHANAN - UNITED STATES ARMY

Born in Massachusetts, Sgt. Major Buchanan received three Bronze Stars for his service during the Korean War. During his eight years in the U.S. Army as a combat engineer he received Meritorious Commendations.

CAPTAIN RICHARD J. CAIRNS - SAN FRANCISCO POLICE DEPARTMENT

Capt. Cairns strongly supports gays and lesbian officers under his command.

GEORGE COOPER - UNITED STATES NAVY

Mr. Cooper is one of the "Golden Thirteen," the first group of African-American Officer Candidates in the United States Navy back in 1944. The recruit in-processing center in Great Lakes is named after these individuals. Mr. Cooper is heterosexual.

LLOYD DARLING - GREEN BERET, UNITED STATES ARMY

Darling was born in New York and Killed in Action, Vietnam. He served in the 101st Airborne Division with the 5th Special Forces (Green Beret).

LIEUTENANT MARIA ZOE DUNNING - UNITED STATES NAVY

Born in Wisconsin, Lt. Dunning was in the Sixth class of women to graduate from the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, and is presently enrolled in the Stanford Graduate School of Business. Until recently she was on active reserve with the Navy. She came out as a lesbian at Moffett Field NAS four days before the Presidential Inauguration, and has since been separated from her unit and placed on stand-by reserve, with a loss of pay and benefits. She served as a Division Officer on the USS Lexington, a training aircraft carrier, and as a Supply Officer/Comptroller at the Navy Security Station in Washington, D.C. during Desert Storm, responsible for the massive logistical effort of getting supplies to the front. Dunning holds a security clearance and has received the Navy Commendation Medal for Meritorious Service and the Admiral Zumwalt Navy Award.

SERGEANT JUSTIN ELZIE - UNITED STATES MARINE CORP.

Born in Wyoming, Sgt. Elzie is currently a Supply Chief at Camp Lejeune. He was named Marine of The Year 1988 FSSG, received the Southwest Asia Medal for his service in Egypt during Desert Storm and the Navy Achievement Medal. After 11 years in the Marine Corp., Elzie was recommended for honorable discharge in March 1993 for stating his sexual orientation.

CAPTAIN MICHAEL GARY - UNITED STATES ARMY

Born on an American Base In Germany, Capt. Gary is an African-American, West Point Graduate who served in the Army for five years as a Tactical Control Officer for the Hawk Surface to Air Missile System. He is presently in stand-by reserves, has received two Army Commendation Medals, one Army Achievement Medal, and has several Letters of Commendation. He had considered making a career in the Army until he came out as a gay man; the current policy made it impossible for him to lead a full life, settle down with someone and still be honest while serving.

SPECIALIST E4 EUGENE GIANNUNZIO - GREEN BERET, UNITED STATES ARMY

Specialist Giannunzio received a Purple Heart for his three years and two months in combat in Vietnam with the 101 Airborne Division, 5th Special Forces (Green Beret). He is a heterosexual who served alongside Lloyd Darling (see Darling).

SERGEANT BRUCE GRANER - UNITES STATIONS NATIONAL GUARD and SPECIALIST FIRST CLASS UNITED STATES ARMY

Sgt. Graner served in combat with the First Air Cavalry during the Vietnam War as the Assistant Gunner in a field artillery unit. He is heterosexual, married, with four sons. He received the Army Commendation Medal and the Good Conduct Medal for his service in Vietnam. He is also currently a subordinate to Capt. Pam Mindt (see Mindt) in the National Guard.

**FORMER ASST. SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, LAWRENCE KORB
(Manpower, Reserve Affairs, Installations and Logistics)
RET. CAPTAIN UNITED STATES NAVY**

Under President Reagan, Capt. Korb once enforced the present military policy discriminating against gays. He has since changed his stand and has come out in support of lifting the Ban. A heterosexual, Korb's testimony in the Petty Officer Keith Meinhold (see Meinhold) case provides a stunning and concise attack on all the underpinnings of the Ban: Integrity of the system of Command and Rank, Privacy, Trust and Confidence, Public Acceptability, Recruitment and Re-enlistment, Discipline, Good Order and Morale.

SERGEANT ELISEO MARTINEZ - UNITED STATES MARINE CORP

Born in Mexico, Sgt. Martinez served in the Marines for six years and received the Merit Mast for performing above and beyond the call of duty. He is also a graduate of the University of Southern California. He was an Intelligence Interrogation Specialist and received a Top Secret security clearance.

PETTY OFFICER 1ST CLASS V. KEITH MEINHOLD - UNITED STATES NAVY

Born in Florida, Petty Officer Meinhold is most widely known for the fact that in January, 1993, Judge Hatter of the Federal Court in Los Angeles, ordered the U.S. Navy to reinstate him, based on the DoD policy being unconstitutional. He is now back on duty at Moffett Field Naval Station although the U.S. Justice Dept. is once again seeking to discharge him.

OFFICER LEA MILITELLO - SAN FRANCISCO POLICE DEPARTMENT

Ms. Militello was one of the developers of the sensitivity training program for the San Francisco Police Department whose policy allows gays and lesbians to serve on the force.

CAPTAIN PAM MINDT - UNITED STATES NATIONAL GUARD

Born in Nebraska, Capt. Mindt served in the United States Army for three years and seven years in the National Guard, where she is currently a Mental Health Officer conducting psychological evaluations of individuals who are being investigated for inappropriate behavior. She has also spent the last ten years as the Director of Sex Offender Services for the Minnesota Department of Corrections.

**PETTY OFFICER 2ND CLASS RICH MORGAN & WIFE, HEATHER MORGAN
UNITED STATES NAVY**

Born in Pennsylvania, Petty Officer Morgan is a married heterosexual who was a subordinate of Petty Officer Keith Meinhold (see Meinhold). He served in the U.S. Navy for five years. They lived in the same barracks and became friends. Morgan not only knew Meinhold was gay, but asked him to be best man at his wedding. Both men were crewmen together on P3 aircraft, investigating submarines in the Pacific from the air. Morgan served in the U.S. Navy for five years and received the Good Conduct Medal and the Sea Service Ribbon.

STAFF SERGEANT THOMAS PANICCIA - UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

Staff Sgt. Paniccia was born in New York. During his 11 1/2 years in the U.S. Air Force, he was named 1988 Non Commissioned Officer of the Year, 1989 Training Manger of the Year and received three Achievement Medals. He was discharged for stating his sexual orientation on "Good Morning America" in July 1992. While his unit supplied munitions to B52's during Desert Storm Paniccia carried a small American flag with his dog tags next to his heart. He now carries that flag in his wallet along with Gen. Colin Powell's 13 Points to Live By. Paniccia is a Republican

REV. DR. CAROLYN "DUSTY" PRUITT - CAPTAIN, UNITED STATES ARMY AND RESERVE

Born in Texas, Capt. Pruitt served until 1983 when the military began discharge proceedings against her based on a Los Angeles Times article where she stated she was a lesbian. She was about to be promoted to Major two days after the discharge proceedings began. Her case is considered a landmark based on the Ninth Circuit Court's ruling that the military must prove reason for its policy of discrimination against gays and lesbians that is not based on social prejudice. Pruitt is the Minister of the Metropolitan Community Church in Long Beach, CA.

CAPTAIN ROBERT MICHAEL RANKIN, M.D., M.P.H. - UNITED STATES NAVY

Born in Arkansas, Capt. Rankin served in the Navy for over 20 years; two years active, 18 1/2 active reserve, and now on stand-by reserve. He is a veteran of the Vietnam War, where he worked on fire missions, providing medical treatment to injured Marines, and setting up health clinics for Vietnamese villagers. He received "E's for Excellence" for service in combat, as well as awards from the American and Vietnamese governments. Rankin is a certified psychiatrist and has counseled over 300 gay servicemen. He was also the Arkansas State Mental Health Commissioner under then Gov. Bill Clinton.

SPECIALIST E4 JASON SKERIK - UNITED STATES ARMY

Specialist Skerik received the Army Achievement Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, the Kuwait Liberation Medal, the Southwest Asia Medal-Desert Storm, and the National Defense Medal. He received an honorable discharge for this homosexual status.

LIEUTENANT DAVID ZENI - UNITED STATES NAVY

Born in Connecticut, Lt. Zeni served on the nuclear ballistic missile sub, the USS Tecumseh from May 1978 until June 1984. As a Supply Department Head, Zeni was a member of the Sealed Authentication Team, a group of officers in charge of decoding nuclear release orders. He was the recipient of the Navy Achievement Medal.

Filmmakers

PARADE PICTURES, INC. has been in existence for two years, and has been primarily engaged in the development of feature film and television movie projects. The company is also engaged in the production of political and industrial films, with clients including Coca Cola, BBDO/LA, and Blue Cross of California.

JULIAN SIMINSKI, Co-Producer

Julian Siminski has worked as a Public Relations Executive, Screenwriter and Vice President of Development for Parade Pictures, Inc. of Los Angeles. He is currently writing projects including "A WOMAN AT WAR," The true story of Rev. Dusty Pruitt, a Minister with the Metropolitan Community Church in Long Beach, California, and former Captain of the U.S. Army, who was discharged for stating she was a lesbian in a Los Angeles Times article in 1983. Julian is also developing a feature project dealing with the little known story of gays in Nazi concentration camps in World War II, "THE PINK TRIANGLE."

ROB WILSON, Co-Producer

In his fifteen years as a writer, producer and director in television, co-producer Rob Wilson has won both the Emmy and Ace Awards. His work has ranged from investigative journalism to youth-oriented network comedy, and has been broadcast in national syndication on every major network as well as on MTV, The Disney Channel and PBS. Rob's most recent work includes three seasons as a field director on the Disney Channel's "Salute to the American Teacher," profiling outstanding teachers around the country (for which he received the ACE Award), and producing two hours of the Warner Brothers/Telepictures historical documentary series, "The Wild West," which aired nationally in March. He also worked as a field director for the Disney Channel on "The Presidential Inaugural Celebration for Youth" with President Bill Clinton.

MIKE PARENTE, Associate Producer

Mike Parente has worked in Los Angeles for ten years as an independent producer and Post Production Supervisor. He worked on reality-based television programming, syndicated sports programming for ESPN, and most recently was Post Production Supervisor for "The Wild West."